

EXPANDING SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA'S RESOURCES TO ATTRACT TECHNOLOGY-BASED JOBS

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Creating new jobs for Southwest Virginia residents is my highest priority. I actively work with local officials to achieve this goal in a number of ways, including attracting new companies to our region through my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program. In order for our region to attract the technology-based companies that can bring 21st century jobs, locations with the infrastructure necessary to accommodate those businesses must exist throughout our region.

To reach this goal, we are working to expand our region's broadband infrastructure as well as the availability of technology parks that can accommodate the operations of technology-based companies. Last week, we took two significant steps forward in that effort.

One of my original economic development goals for our region was the establishment of industrial parks throughout Southwest Virginia, and today there are industrial parks in nearly every County of the Ninth District. Many of these are "smart" technology parks, which include the broadband infrastructure and other necessary facilities to attract technology-based companies. One such park is the Scott County Business and Technology Park in Duffield, which includes the Crooked Road Technology Center.

Last week, I announced that at my urging the U.S. Department of Commerce, through its Economic Development Administration, would provide a federal grant of \$2,022,814 for the construction of the second phase of the Technology Center, which will double the Center's size. When construction is completed, the Crooked Road Technology Center is expected to attract companies employing 250 in high-wage, technology-based jobs.

We took an additional step last week in creating technology-based jobs for the region when I joined with Virginia Tech and Blacksburg officials in breaking ground on a major expansion of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. The Center is a major economic resource for Southwest Virginia. Currently, the Center consists of 27 buildings housing 140 private high-tech

companies and research centers that employ more than 2,200 individuals. The Corporate Research Center was constructed with the assistance of federal funding I secured in 1985.

With \$1,980,000 in federal funds provided at my request last year, the Center has begun an expansion which includes 18 additional buildings with the potential to house up to 100 new companies and employ 2,500 individuals. The federal funds will help construct a new road nearly a mile in length from the existing Corporate Research Center site to the 95 acres on which the expansion will be built. Additionally, a new water and wastewater system and fiber-optic cable will be installed throughout the site with the assistance of the federal funding.

The expansions of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center and the Crooked Road Technology Center will improve our region's capacity to attract technology based jobs. I look forward to similar advancements in other parts of Southwest Virginia.

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